

I am astonished--and disturbed--that the United States Congress is prepared to even consider taking away the property rights of local communities for what amounts to nothing more than the convenience of 3 of the nation's largest telephone companies. This is a federal taking of the first water, telling local communities what they can and cannot do with the public property that they own, maintain and approve.

The consequence of serving the convenience of the Bell companies is huge; and would be destructive to the community in which I live: Lafayette, Louisiana. It would endanger the local public access channel (Acadiana Open Channel, AOC) which serves as a forum for essential political discourse and is a truly unique cultural asset--it is likely the only place in the country, for instance with french language talk shows!. NO commercial concern will ever serve our diverse Cajun and Creole cultures in the way that our local access channel already does.

You may have heard that we have trouble with hurricanes down here...the federal law would make no allowance for a local government to impose special public service requirements for emergency telecom support when extraordinary bandwidth is required. Is that the intent of the Congress?

Most offensive is that while convenience is what the phone companies plead, their fiscal interest is well-served--and the communities' interests ill-served--by refusing to allow local communities to require that all the citizens be served equally if the corporation is to be afforded the privilege of using local property. This is simply wrong.

In short, making corporate telecom use of local government property a federally sanctioned right is both foolish and bad policy. I hope the FCC is able to muster the courage to refuse to adopt or endorse any such measure.